

Message Text

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ACTION ITF-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 VO-03 SCA-01

INSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSO-00

NSCE-00 AID-05 IGA-01 /079 W
----- 049134

P R 070925Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9806

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

USUN NEW YORK 548

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 2494

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF MY VS

SUBJ: MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT REQUESTS ASSISTANCE FROM U.S.
REGARDING 492 REFUGEES

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 2461

1. ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL ZAKARIA CALLED ME IN TODAY.
HIS PURPOSE WAS TO REPEAT IN VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL TERMS
GOM'S REQUEST MADE YESTERDAY TO POLITICAL COUNSELLOR THAT WE
ASSIST VIETNAMESE REFUGEES NOW ON PERHENTIAN ISLAND TO PROCEED
TO THE UNITED STATES. HE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS PROVIDING FOOD
AND MEDICAL ATTENTION, THAT THE REFUGEES HAD ARRIVED IN SMALL BOATS
"ATTEMPTING TO REACH AN AMERICAN MILITARY BASE," BUT WERE UNABLE TO
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PROCEED FURTHER BECAUSE OF THE UNSEAWORTHINESS OF THEIR CRAFT.

ZAKARIA WENT ON TO SAY THAT MALAYSIA COULD NOT ABSORB THE REFUGEES. IT WAS A NATION OF DELICATE RACIAL BALANCE AND AN ALIEN GROUP COULD NOT BE ABSORBED AND WOULD NOT BE HAPPY HERE.

2. I REPLIED THAT WE SYMPATHIZED WITH HIS GOVERNMENT'S PROBLEM, BUT THAT THE UNITED STATES AT THIS STAGE COULD NOT BE OF ASSISTANCE. I OUTLINED THE DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM WE WERE NOW CONFRONTED WITH THE REFUGEE TENT CAMPS IN OUR PHILIPPINE BASES, IN GUAM, AND THE UNITED STATES AND THE TREMENDOUS STRAIN THAT 120,000 REFUGEES WERE PUTTING ON ALL OF OUR FACILITIES. I NOTED THAT THERE WERE 7,000 VIETNAMESE ON SHIPS IN SINGAPORE TERRITORIAL WATERS AND THAT THE GOS WAS MAKING SIMILAR REQUESTS FOR OUR ASSISTANCE. I NOTED THE ADVERSE PUBLIC REACTION IN SOME CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES, AND PARTICULARLY CONGRESSIONAL UNHAPPINESS THAT OTHER NATIONS WERE NOT RESPONDING MORE GENEROUSLY TO THE PLIGHT OF THE REFUGEES. I SAID THAT AT SOME FUTURE TIME WE WOULD HOPE TO CONSIDER THE APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO THE U.S. OF THOSE WHO WISHED TO COME, BUT THAT FOR THE PRESENT WE WERE UNABLE TO HELP. I NOTED A UNITED NATIONS HCR ANNOUNCEMENT IN NEW YORK THAT ONE OF HIS REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BE VISITING MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE SHORTLY. I SUGGESTED THAT THIS UN OFFICIAL BE REQUESTED TO ASSIST IN THE PROBLEM. I ALSO MENTIONED THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPEAN MIGRATION (ICEM) AS A POSSIBLE SOURCE OF ASSISTANCE.

3. ZAKARIA ASKED HOW LONG IT WOULD BE BEFORE WE COULD RESPOND. I SAID I DID NOT KNOW, THAT THE MOVEMENT AND RESETTLEMENT OF OVER 100,000 PEOPLE WOULD TAKE SOME TIME AND THAT I COULD NOT PREDICT WHEN THIS PROCESS WOULD BE COMPLETED.

4. COMMENT: ZAKARIA MADE NO STRONG EFFORT TO TRY TO SHIFT RESPONSIBILITY BACK TO US. WE HAVE HEARD INFORMALLY THAT FOREIGN OFFICE HAD RECOMMENDED A MORE FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE AND WAS OVER-RULED BY POLITICAL ELEMENTS FEARING ADVERSE PUBLIC REACTION TO INFLUX OF REFUGEES. THIS GROUP IS NOW ASHORE AND IS BEING CARED FOR. I
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DON'T BELIEVE THERE IS ANY DANGER THAT GOM WOULD ATTEMPT FORCEFUL REPATRIATION. RECOMMEND THAT FOR THE TIME BEING WE HOLD TO POSITION OUTLINED ABOVE.
UNDERHILL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975KUALA02494
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750159-0948
From: KUALA LUMPUR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750574/aaaacpps.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ITF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 KUALA LUMPUR 2461
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <31 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT REQUESTS ASSISTANCE FROM U.S. REGARDING 492 REFUGEES
TAGS: SREF, MY, VS, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006